

HOW TO WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

With man's appetite awakened for the Word of Truth, and reasonable effort made to follow through, God's grace takes up. It is the Holy Spirit working to clarify the terms of God's beautifully exquisite plan so man can have the same mind as does God about every truth in His Word. The Faith is thereby enlightened and enlarged. Of course, God's grace never did or will automate arrival at the goal, no matter what man says about God's grace. The learner is required to exercise himself in proper use of the God-given tools and plan.

It is through man's own efforts within God's plan, with whatever additional help is required from the Father, that he is to make progress toward the goal of becoming perfect (matured) as is his Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:48) All who would follow Christ to the summit of full sonship must themselves take on His yoke and pull alongside with Him (His will in His plan). They must be taught and tutored by Him, if they would arrive at the completeness and maturity required. His plan, His goals, His Truth, He himself must become and remain by far more important than anyone or anything. Otherwise, His grace is wasted!

Let us not engage in contest with Almighty God. He who so successfully handles the variables in the immensity of the universe can somehow manage our little problems better than we. When we find ourselves, as we do so often, at odds with His plan, let us immediately sue for peace, peace on His terms. Then the joy of real progress up the ladder will again be ours. Then true worship develops.

When well versed and well practiced in the Lord's plan (designed totally for our benefit), when possessing an adequate store of the Faith through His Grace, we begin to know Him. Then we begin to honestly appreciate Him for His immeasurable love for each of His children, and He can be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

What is that worship? Not surprisingly, the word means different things to different people. Perhaps even we should make certain of what the Lord recognizes as worship and make sure we can be His

different and "peculiar" people. To some, this concluding analysis may be a block buster, so be reminded to give the Lord thanks for all things!

The worship words used in the Old and New Testaments have basically the same meanings, with but little variation. The Old Testament treats the physical aspects primarily; the New deals with the spiritual applications. In the New Testament, Worship and Love walk the same path, to be joined as they reach higher elevations by their more intense sister, Adoration.

But let us be careful and sensitive. If we think we know it all beforehand, we surely do not know it as we ought; we are but children in training. (1Cor. 8:2, Matt. 18:3)

Come, let us see how the Lord views acceptable worship. It will not be an exhaustive review of passages on worship; the verses are selected also for the additional illumination they may offer.

Gen. 22:5 - And Abram said, I and the young man (probably 33 years old then) will go yonder and worship. Abram went yonder to sacrifice his own son with a knife! The actual worship in mind was doing what God had asked. Of course, he subsequently bowed down in thanksgiving and praise when the ram supplied by Jehovah-Jireh (Yahweh seen manifesting - there) was sacrificed in place of Isaac.

Ex. 32:5, 6, 8 - When Aaron saw the molten calf, he built an altar before it and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. Early the next day, they brought burnt and peace offerings; the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. The Lord said to Moses, They have made a golden calf and worshipped it! Their claim was that the copy of the Egyptian calf represented the gods who brought them up from Egypt. They bowed down to it as their keeper. Always the worship of the gods of Egypt was to placate them and buy their favor. Even today, the typical turning to God is to beseech Him during a seige of trouble. Worship in such a frame does not exactly please the Lord!

Neh. 8:6 - And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, having opened the Book of the Law of Moses. All the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up

their hands; and then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with faces toward the ground. Was the lifting of hands and bowing of heads toward the ground their worship of the Lord? No indeed! They had come together with one mind to learn God's plan. They had prepared themselves to study from early morning to at least noon. They were so intent on being taught they wept, upon hearing and understanding. That was worship, well pleasing to God. Then joy in trusting Him became their strength, and they celebrated the restoration of the Word to their midst. Read about it and compare to what Christians do today.

Ps. 29:2 - Give to the Lord the glory due His "name"; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Is it "bow down" to Him in the beauty of His holiness, or is the beauty to be seen by Him in the one setting himself utterly apart from the usual practice of believers in traditional worship?

Ps. 95:6-7 - Come, let us worship (bow down); let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God (Keeper) and we are the people of His pasture (the "field" of spiritual food into which He brings His own) and the sheep of His hand (the followers in His work). Today, if you will hear His voice (in His Word), harden not your heart in provocation or contention. "Let us worship." Is not the worship in view the digesting of His Word and following in His work pattern?

Isa. 2:8, 20 - Their land (microcosm inner as well as geographical) is filling with idols; they worship the work of their own hands. In the Day of the Lord, men shall cast away their idols of silver and of gold which they made for themselves to worship. The average Christian's "land" today is more filled with idols than in Isaiah's time. The idols are the pursuits and possessions that usurp time for learning and living God's plan for man's well-being. That is the thrust of the worship noted here, not a perfunctory nod of the head and raising of hands, or words of praise or prayer. If you love Me, you will do what I have said!

Jer. 13:10 - This evil people who refuse to hear My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their

heart and have gone after other gods to serve them and to worship them ... are profitable for nothing. The term "evil people" seems to let us off the hook - until we realize the Lord speaks here of naughty, troublesome, mischievous little children. See the qualities to which their "worship" is linked. Refusal to conform to (really hear) My words. Walking in stubbornness of heart-desire. Relying upon things and other people to keep away harm and unpleasantness. Serving them! What then is the "worship", the obeisance the Lord hates?

Amos 5:21 - Although the word "worship" is not used here, listen to the Lord as He describes believer's worship during the Day of the Lord, fulfilling in our generation. I hate your festival celebrations; I will not smell the savor or take delight in your solemn assemblies. Though you (go through the motions to) offer Me burnt offerings (whole sacrifice - see Ro. 12:1-2) and your accompanying cereal offerings (seed), I will not accept them; neither will I look upon the voluntary sacrifice of fatted beasts (money, possessions) in thanks (peace offering).

Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not listen to the melody of your "viols" (lyres, but also vessels - thereby referring to melody from the human body). But let justice run down like water (overflowing) and rightness as an overflowing stream. Did you bring Me the sacrifices and cereal offerings during the 40 years in the wilderness (your period of testing and proving)? No. Instead, you carried the tent of your hidden one (referring to Lucifer), your images of your star-god, which you made for yourselves (variants from the plan of the true God). Where did He say "worship" is actually being directed by the majority of believers in the Day of the Lord?

Zeph. 1:4-7, 15-16 - I will stretch out my hand over Judah (meaning praise - today's Christendom) ... and I will cut off the remnant of Baal ... and those who worship and swear by the Lord, and yet swear by Malcham (Molech, referring to Satan in disguise) ... and those who have (in God's view) drawn back from following the Lord ... for the Day of

the Lord is near ... the Day of Wrath, of distress and anguish, ... of the blast of the Trumpet. The Lord surely looks carefully and thoughtfully at what lies behind the bowing down posture of heart and mind! The foundation of true worship is in learning and practicing God's plan for man!

Matt. 4:9 - And the devil said to Jesus, All these things I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him, ... You shall worship the Lord (the One in control) your God (the One who keeps safe) and Him only shall you serve. Again we see the inseparable linking of worship and cooperation. We have been told, and properly so, that the Greek of worship used twice here means "kissing the hand toward", but it goes further. The word picture in it is that of a faithful dog coming to his master and licking his hand. The picture over-all is one of willing, even eager cooperation exclusively with the Master (the Lord). Is it really worship which we observe in the nation's church meetings?

When one is all warm in his heart toward our Lord, praising His name, singing His praises, even praying to Him - is it worship He sees? Maybe, maybe not; maybe, but usually maybe not. At times He said, I hate your festivals, your sacrifices, your righteousness, etc.! I do not hear your prayers! Can He view these expressions as true worship in spirit, if there is less than constant attention toward learning and doing what His plan calls for in daily living?

Within these terms, how many worship meetings are worship meetings? How many who worship are worshippers? One who consistently and extensively studies sound teaching in new as well as familiar truths, in their manifold applications, may have something viable (in spirit and in truth) on which to base real worship. But where are others left who are too busy to be taught or study?

Matt. 15:9, 8 - But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commands (instructions) of men. This people honor Me with their lips, but their heart holds Me off. It is in vain, if we try to separate the Lord's concept of worship (faithful

following) from teaching and practice of His plan. What then should be any worship service? What must be every worship service, if it is not in vain?

Lk. 18:8 - The word worship is not found here, but the concept of worship is very much the subject. Even though the Lord is ready to defend, protect and avenge speedily, when the Son of man comes, will He indeed find the Faith or this Faith on earth? Shouldn't each one living today look in a full length mirror and evaluate "worship"?

Jhn. 4:23-24 - A time will come, indeed is already here, when the true worshippers (those as faithful to their Master as is the dog which comes to lick his master's hand) will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is seeking just such people as these to be His worshippers. (Apparently he was not finding very many.) God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. What is truth? That was Pilate's question to Him who had proclaimed, "I am the Truth!". His name is "The Word of God." (Rev. 19:13) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. (Jhn. 1:1) Worship in truth is faithfully learning and practicing the plan which is the Word of God. The thanks, praise, lifting of hands, and rejoicing follow suit.

What is worship in spirit? It is not at all an exercise in the preferences and desires of a soul not yet wholly committed within the plan of God! The function of the spirit was intended to be that of making right decisions, guided by Truth and not by what is thought might be more enjoyable and comfortable. Worship in spirit is precisely tied in with the Spirit of God so it must exclusively encompass learning and practicing God's plan for man's well-being. Does this statement of Jesus Christ do anything to your worship pattern? If it is confirmed, rejoice; if not, better plan an early about face!

Jhn. 17:4 - I have glorified You (enhanced Your reputation and magnificance - also translated worshipped elsewhere) down here on the land by completing the work that You gave Me to do. This embraced Jesus Christ's total worship of His Father; and Jesus said He demonstrated the way in which every

follower of His should live.

Many other passages could well be brought into the study, but all would present the same lesson. We are here to learn and practice to become skillful in performing the lessons the Lord has put before all men on earth. There is no other way to truly worship Him. When we understand and then experience what the plan produces, the Faith and faithfulness increase. He sees to that. But if we employ man-developed worship patterns, too late we learn it has been in vain.

If a Christian comments about how uplifting the "worship" is in his church or prayer group, but also tells about poor quality of the teaching, will that now trigger any definite conclusion? Shouldn't it? Worship is not fulfilled through saying or singing nice things, even glorious things. Nor is worship fulfilled by warmness of heart and emotional expressions. Fulfillment of worship necessitates much more, if it is to be worship in spirit and in truth. The pith of right worship is doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God. True worship is the hearing of (conformance to) the Father's counsel, His plan for bringing up His children. That eliminates much, or most, or sometimes all of what people do in Church as they "worship". (Micah 6:8-9)

WORSHIP OR HYPOCRISY

The impression given in Scripture is that few really believe what is taught there about worship which God can and will accept, and worship which is in vain. There are nine words in Old and New Testaments translated "worship" in English translations. Some of them probably should not have been.

The word most widely utilized in the Old Testament presents the picture of prostrating one's self in homage, faithfulness in service to one in higher station. Another, taken from the Chaldean, gives the same sense; it is used eight times. The third Old Testament word is found but once as "worship", and it carries the meanings of fabricate, fashion, worry, grieve, hurt, be sorry, vex - and worship. It probably should not have been so translated.

There are three New Testament words translated as "worship", each so translated in the text only once. One carries the meanings, respect, show piety, as well as worship. Another of the once such translated words is used elsewhere to depict voluntary piety or a hypocritical show of piety, as well as worship. The third describes the recognition of renown or reputation, praise, and worship.

Two other of the Greek words are translated "worship" three times each. One carries thoughts of serving, giving religious homage - and worship. The other is used to describe one who reveres, adores, is devout and is religious - a worshipper.

Before examining the ninth word, by far the most frequently translated "worship", refer to some descriptions of the AntiChrist. He will take his seat in the dwelling place of the God. (2Thess. 2:4) He will say, "I am a god. I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas (soul of the nations - in terror). I will make myself like the Most High." (Ezek. 28:2, Isa. 14:14) The whole earth will pay homage to the dragon ...; they worshipped him, exclaiming, Who is a match for him and who can make war against him! (Rev. 13:4)

This most translated "worship" word is rich in content. A literal rendition would tell about kissing the hand toward (the one being "worshipped"). It is parallel to the familiar action of the faithful dog licking his master's hand. This word especially is used to speak of giving homage (a promise of loyalty in service). The hand being kissed represents the work or program of the one being "worshipped", and therefore refers to following his orders in implementing his program toward arriving at his objectives.

Look at four examples in which worship of the one God is described, for fruitfulness on earth. "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him alone you shall serve." (Matt. 4:10) "In vain do you worship Me, teaching the directions of men (do this, don't do that) as doctrines (to be put into practice)." (Matt. 15:9) "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength." (Mk. 12:30-33)

"True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth;" not "in Spirit" but in the spirit of determination to live Truth. "He is seeking just such people as His worshippers." (Jhn.4:23) Without serving, it is not worship the Lord can accept!

It thus becomes easily evident that "worship" is not what the most of Christendom thinks. It also should be evident that the "worship" which the Lord cannot accept almost inadvertently becomes twisted into worship of the man of lawlessness. It would almost make one take a second look and have second thoughts every time he is surrounded with traditional church worship.

SEDUCTION INTO WORSHIP

A great part of the world (probably many in every land) will eventually worship either the man of lawlessness, or his organization, or both. It will be in fear and terror, as well as in hope of advancement. Many who today wear the Christian label will be seduced into the worship. At least during the concluding 21 months of this man's empowerment, the worship openly becomes actual worship of Satan. It will be the result of little training into trusting the Lord. Traditionally, religious teachers have tolerated Christian's looking up human experts for reducing or curing their problems. Christians have been trained in not trusting the Lord, but to hear the Jezebel of Rev. 2:20, whether the problem is medical, financial or spiritual. The greater the problem, the worse is the record.

The man of lawlessness will appeal through the emotions and intensified desires for security. His claim to loyalty from all will be sold through clever and self-serving propaganda. "Come and see how peaceful our system is, wherever it has been thoroughly installed! We have no uprisings, no expression of outrage or discontent. But all this is still to be seen in the capitalist lands. Join with us and be comfortable and safe. Yes, the Western influence of the Church does deceive a few unthinking people into briefly obstructing their dedicated government's work for their benefit (as in Poland), but they soon see the truth and

cooperate. It is we who can bring peace to the earth, where all other approaches have failed - actually doomed to fail."

"We have the best public medicine program in the world; everyone is cared for. We alone have the answer to unemployment - obviously. We have the best retirement plan and old age care. Why settle for less when you can join with us. When all nations do, you too will be covered, wherever you may be. Don't sell out to trust in some religion (opiate of the masses); that really drugs instead of helps anyone. Work for your greater success by working with us, and you will be glad you did!"

Of course, a problem arises when the Firstfruits 144,000 "evaporate" out of their clothing, and six days later repeatedly appear here and there, as if by magic, but in solid reality. They will bring with them unassailable proof that God is, proof of the Truth He has had deposited in the Sacred Writings as "thus says the Lord," and proof that He alone is worthy of full trust in any matter. So the beast system will mount a massive and world-wide program to discredit and otherwise "explain" what then seems to have taken place. Quite a few people will be on the edge of readiness to initiate a revolution in life style because of the events, increasing pressures and truth presentations that are new and convincing. But even most of them will be turned back from the edge by deceitful, seducing blasphemies from the beast system.

We have a tremendous blessing now, being given a measure of time to lay an unmovable foundation, not just by claim, but in fact. We can, if we will, build a capacity and habit of trust exclusively in the one Deliverer and Savior, not built on religious fervor, or what appears as devotion, but on experiential attainment within the one plan being taught by the one Teacher. It will develop only in the way precisely as detailed in the Word of God. (Lk. 17:5-8) To the extent we work that blessing into our lives, we insulate ourselves from being drawn off by spurious reports and ingratiating promises.

Only in such a consciously managed approach will anyone escape worshipping the bestial image, the

man of lawlessness and Satan. Nominal Christians having inadequate preparation for knowing what to trust for absolute protection and preservation, wherever they may be, will be given into the influence of the man of lawlessness - and frustration, for a time, and times (two) and the dividing of time (3 1/2 years), to encourage willingness and determination to complete the preparation. It is far better and easier to ensure preparation beforehand!

BE TAUGHT, OR GET TAUT

Jesus proclaimed that the Truth He taught, would set entirely free from the curses Adam and Eve brought upon themselves. Would you become free, or would you be stretched to the breaking point?

Here is an important facet of truth which only a few have seen. It has to do with teaching. Without teaching of the unperverted truths contained in the Law and the Testimony (Isa. 8:20), deception of Christians continues without their being aware of it, the falling away from the stand true Christians should maintain accelerates, the man of lawlessness remains unrecognized and free to work more harm, and his seductions intensify and expand. He becomes the one more and more worshipped by Christians, while they are unaware of what is taking place. Then, instead of Christ drawing closer in His approach to the Christian, He must withdraw, becoming increasingly intangible. (2Thess. 2:3-6, 10)

Apostasy such as the world has never before seen develops because of church tolerance of the perversions in religious teaching. (Rev. 2:20-22) Jesus earlier called this the "leaven" of the Pharisees. Tolerance of the "leaven" in teaching is greater today than ever. The revealing of the man of lawlessness cannot come without teaching exclusively from Christ being both offered and received - void of the "leaven" in other teachings all around.

The Law and the Testimony declare that pure teaching of Gods' plan for man's well-being is of the essence. Unless that teaching is received with no leaven content, the ever so prevalent horse blinders on heads of Christians remain fixed, and the man of lawlessness gleefully and victoriously

pulls in haul after haul of fish from the sea. It should have been foreseen that the man of lawlessness works first of all in the Church through Church leaders to seduce Christians as they engage in what is labeled "Christian worship" - by almost unbelievable seductions! In 2Thess. 2, we read that Christ will not and cannot approach before the great falling away from uncontaminated truth becomes evident to the Christian, and before the influence of the man of lawlessness is revealed.

Only when the Christian receives God's truth in its pure form and then does something with it is the work of the man of lawlessness within revealed. We need to understand the personal application, as well as the global one. Jesus Christ teaches that all have been seduced by the ancient dragon, Satan. That is why He is continually calling His own to come out from under the contaminated religious influence still pervading church, business and politics. Don't even think any were not caught in that net! (Rev. 12:9, 18:2-7) Each Christian begins with a full load of this leaven. He is called to work his way out, while taking on no more. (Isa. 52:11)

Indeed, the baleful influence has pervaded everywhere! You too must be aware that many Christians who are church-goers attend their Church in spite of whatever teaching is offered; they go for the entertainment and the "worship." Today, worship pleasing to the Lord is attentive hearing of the Faith, His Word, and then working to put it into practice. That is how He worshipped His Father. But we read that all the world is worshipping or will worship the Rev. 13 Beast. (Rev. 13:3-4) The "worship" pleasing to the Devil is also the attentive hearing of his seductive "truths" and then adapting them into daily living.

The modern beast system of communist government certainly permits and almost encourages church "worship" which does not teach the ways of God. Indeed, much that is labeled "Christian worship" has come into being as a result of centuries of almost unbelievable seductions, without limit, to deceive those being destroyed. (2Thess. 2:10) Take special note here that the many being made

ineffective (being destroyed) are primarily "Christians" with strong Church affiliations.

The Lord's primary assignment to His advanced children is, Teach! He commanded Moses to teach the adult Israelites. Moses then commanded them to teach their children, diligently whetting and sharpening the truths, until they would penetrate hard heads and hearts. (Deut. 6:1, 7) In the context of the Lord's command to seek His face, David implored the Lord to teach him His way. (Ps. 27:11) Whom will the Lord teach this knowledge so vital in preservation? Those who are weaned from all that installed the blinders in the first place. (Isa. 28:9) Only then are men in position to be reached and taught His ways so as to know enough to walk in His paths. (Isa. 2:3)

Even in and after the Millennium, nations that do not come annually to Kingdom headquarters in Jerusalem for teaching will suffer drought - no refreshing Water, giving life, will fall on those lands. (Zech. 14:17) Jesus said of him who practices and teaches the truths of the Law and the Testimony that he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven (on earth). (Matt. 5:19) He told His disciples to refuse the leaven of other's teaching. By the statement, He told them they could. Implicit also, if they would, was the fact that the pure teaching separated off would have no leaven content at all.

Christ teaches only people who will exercise themselves in discernment, taking measure with the whole of the Law and the Testimony. Whom does the man of lawlessness teach? Anyone, everyone who is agreeable to gulping down whatever a trusted brother says is true, overlooking, or being unwilling or too lazy to carefully test the "whatever" against the Teacher's Word. (Isa. 8:20) All might be found guilty of that, but none have been without opportunity to weigh and evaluate what is heard. By the grace of God, you too can learn to discern precisely what to accept and what to shun - if you yet will!

The matured learner becomes like either his teacher or his Teacher. (Matt. 10:25) In the time of the Apostles, as long as faithfulness to teaching the Faith was maintained, wonder works and signs

accompanied. When the same kind of faithfulness in teaching the unperturbed truth of the Faith is again proven, even greater works will be the order of the day! (Jhn. 14:12) But that will not happen without the Faith in teaching again being both offered and received without leaven. Sound and pure teaching is the key to a victorious Christian life. The Glorious Church can not possibly come into being, except for the work of those who insist upon Bible teaching containing no perversions of the truth of God's Word. Attentively hear only tutors chosen by God to teach, those consistently proven by their adherence exclusively to the Law and the Testimony.

These Bible truths are written (for teaching) that you should be believing that Jesus is the Anointed, the Son of God and that, through believing (accepting only His teaching, without leaven), you may be having age-enduring physical Life (zoe) through His "name." (Jhn. 20:31) It is echoed throughout Holy Scripture that His teaching, without leaven, is vital and readily available to and for all who really care more to serve than to rule. The objective of the man of lawlessness and his "sons" is to rule with pseudo-truth, seductively displacing God's plan for man's well-being - and he has found ever so many inadvertent allies among the sincere, well-meaning - and stubborn!

Think upon the Lord's warnings when listening to a brother; compare it to what has been taught by his and your Father - who knows your need. Be careful what you are hearing; the measure of your thoughtful choice will be the measure of what you gain or lose. (Mk. 4:24-25) Be careful how you listen; the measure of the validity of your understanding will be the measure of your gain or loss. (Lk. 8:18) Call upon an older brother for clarification or guidance only if he maintains a good track record in avoiding leaven. The Lord, He is faithful. Do your part, and He will strengthen you on His firm foundation and guard from all harmful teaching. (2Thess. 3:3)

Apprehension of the Lord's uncontaminated teaching leads to preservation from all harm. The perhaps more convenient tolerance of faulty teaching from children brings extension to the breaking

point, ultimately even into spiritual "AIDS." The far better way is the Lord's way!

BALANCE IN WORSHIP

It remains fact that true worship is in the act of doing the will of Jesus Christ our Lord. True worship is in cooperation with Him. Therefore, true worship is in learning what He has presented in His Word for man's well-being, working to understand it, trying out in practice what has been understood and, through consistent practice, overcoming whatever hinders progress.

Through engagement in this process, one comes to better understand for what to pray - so there can be more effective cooperation. Therefore, prayer in spirit and in truth is a vital part of worship. Through experience in the process of true worship, one also comes to realize the Lord is continually active in his behalf, that there are successes attributable only to His involvement and that cooperation results in great joy, as total trust builds in the Lord and His plan.

Where recognition of benefit and appreciation build, praise and thanksgiving become spontaneous. True praise and true thanksgiving are always for something specific and of value. Such praise and thanksgiving take form in song or in prose (the Song of Moses, etc.). And where there is mutual investment of self in another, love grows. Therefore, thoughtful, sincere expressions of praise and thanks, when coming from the inner man, in love, are also important components of true worship.

The Father seeks those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. This sort of worship is not in going through the motions, with mind and heart on focus elsewhere, even on the nice tune of a song. Ideally, it is with an entire involvement in and with the specifics of working out His will for His children's greatest good. Of course, that introduces the importance in true worship of growing trust. But worship in spirit is also to be accompanied by worship in truth. When it is "in truth:", it is specifically tied into the Lord's teaching. That brings us full circle to agreement that true worship

centers on accepting, learning, understanding, practice of and overcoming in what leads toward conformance to the Word of God.

Nevertheless, it is just as possible to sit through even sound teaching, without there being any true worship, as it is to miss true worship during praise and thanksgiving in speech or song. You must know what you are saying or singing, and why; it must be in sincerity; it must be a result of specific experience. Unless these components of true worship are not consciously attuned to Jesus Christ, what He has done, is doing and promises to yet accomplish with cooperation, it misses being worship in spirit and in truth.

When one has been through a difficult and dangerous encounter and recognizes the blessing and preserving as from the loving hand of the Father, he is likely to pour out his heart in hymns of praise (not necessarily song). He is singing in spirit and in truth! If one has been without food for several days, when asked to "give thanks" for the meal to which he has just been invited, his words will likely be filled with thanks in spirit and in truth. When joy is building from knowing that everything from the Father's hand is for good, and particularly when some significant success is experienced, the reponse in praise is in spirit and in truth.

Rather obviously, all phases of true worship anchor into the teachings of Jesus Christ. Without continuing progress in that, there is little true worship. That is why our Lord so emphasized His straight-forward teaching and correcting, in succeeding waves. When from your heart you honor the Father by listening, accepting, learning, understanding, practicing in and overcoming hindrances to the Faith, blessing results. When appreciation pours from an honest, upright heart, He is pleased with the total worship in spirit and in truth. His joy is in seeing that His son or daughter has arrived at some understanding of the relationship!

C. Gordon Wolcott

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